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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 116 (2014) 2871 – 2875

**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences5<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Educational Sciences - WCES 2013

# An analysis of xix<sup>th</sup> century ottoman garden culture: garden kiosks

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## Abstract

Ottoman Architecture, especially after Tulip Era, started to develop in a different direction. Architectural works formed during this period reflected this change in a very remarkable way. The purpose of this study is to shed light on the architecture of this period by creating a comprehensive assessment of garden kiosks built during the XIX<sup>th</sup> century as important elements of Ottoman garden architecture. It is accepted that garden kiosks were built in order to carry on the tradition of gardening in Ottoman society. The architectural attitude of the period is reflected in all details of garden kiosks and increasing the number of the examples plays an important role on shedding light on Ottoman garden architecture and history of architecture.

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Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Education and Research Center.

*Keywords:* Ottoman, architecture, garden, kiosk, istanbul;

## 1. Introduction

Ottoman Architecture, especially after Tulip Era (1718-1730) and later in the period called as “Westernization Period”, had started to develop in a different direction. Architectural works formed during this period in which new interpretations were being searched with the rapidly changing cultural and social structure, reflected this change in a very remarkable way.

The act of ‘Westernization’ in architecture which had become more significant starting with the reign of Sultan Selim III (1789) and was effective until the end of the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1909), has led a number of changes in garden layouts as well. Summer palaces built in Bosphorus, with their large gardens, became very important places where Ottoman Sultans spent most of their time by resting, taking long walks, taking care of various species of plants and animals or arranging great feasts. Therefore, especially in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, garden kiosks were built in many royal gardens, woods and private gardens of *yalı* and kiosks (Atasoy, 2002: 30).

Garden kiosks are one of the important elements of gardens which are mostly designed in variable scales for resting or enjoying the view. As a part of the garden, they may have been constructed simultaneously with other structures in the garden or at a later date. They are built especially for the garden in order to spend a few hours during the day without any accommodation purposes and their scales are relatively small when compared with the main building groups that take place in the same garden.

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In order to describe the examples given below, in situ observations were made and each of these kiosks was photographed with their details. Especially for the non-existing examples, previous studies, texts and books were examined. In addition, the related documents in the archives of *Kültür Varlıklarını Koruma Kurulu* (Preservation Board of Cultural Resources) and *TBMM Milli Saraylar* (National Palaces) were searched in order to find their plans, site plans, sections, elevation drawings and restoration reports. Consulting the specialists from related areas like history of architecture, history of art and history has provided a significant contribution to this study as well.

## 2. Examples of garden kiosks in Istanbul

By many architectural and art historians, garden kiosks are accepted to have been inspired by the forms of tents in Iran, Central Asia or Anatolia. Tents pitched up in military camps and ceremonies were used as permanent or temporary shelters and they were replaced by garden kiosks as from the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the concept of “kiosk” appeared as a special typology in Anatolia. Garden kiosks were built as a part of nature, combining with the garden as a whole. In addition, they were placed according to the surrounding view (Atasoy, 2004: 98-99, Eldem, Salt Research Center Sedat Hakkı Eldem Archive, File No. TSHEAN00601).

Garden kiosks are anticipated to be spacious and airy with a wide angle of view and these wooden or stonework kiosks are designed with shutters or curtains in order to avoid the weather effects. Their plan schemes vary according to their dimensions. While small kiosks are usually designed as quadrangular, circular, hexagonal or octagonal spaces, larger examples consist of a central space with additional niches providing a wider viewing angle. Garden kiosks are covered with tiled or lead roofs with wide eaves which were built in curved forms with the spread of Baroque features. Interiors are designed with sofas, fountains and small marble pools (Eldem, 1976: 262; Eldem, Salt Research Center Sedat Hakkı Eldem Archive, File No. TSHEAN00601).

### 2.1. Kağıthane Çadır Kiosk

Kağıthane promenade has gained importance as from XVIII<sup>th</sup> century after the travel of Ambassador Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi to France. He praised Sultan Ahmed III for the beauty of European gardens which exemplified the design of Kağıthane region with Sadabad Palace, kiosks, fountains, cascades and a large canal called as “*Cetvel-i Sim*” (Arel, 1975: 25-27). In this landscape, after the collapse of Kasr-ı Neşat which had been built beside Sadabad Palace in 1723, *Çadır Kiosk* (Tent Kiosk) was built at the same place in 1815 under the reign of Mahmud II (Eldem, 1974: 224). Since the architect of the palace is Kırkor Balyan, he must have designed this kiosk as well (Eyice, 1986: 33). Eyice, referring to Kasr-ı Neşat, mentions that Sultan Ahmed III had been sitting inside this kiosk watching the water flow and listening to the sound of water (1994: 457). *Çadır Kiosk*, built at the same place, must have a similar purpose (Atasoy, 2002: 283).

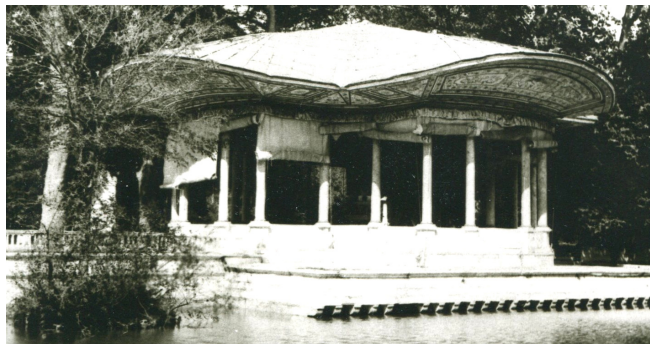


Figure 1. *Çadır Kiosk* (Atasoy Collection, İstanbul University Library, 90461).

*Çadır Kiosk*, consists of a circular central space with a diameter about 9 m and three niches added to this space. Its curved roof with a wide eave is supported by 20 composite columns. In the middle of the central space, there is a fountain pool. The façade is adorned with wreath motives giving an impression of Empire Style (Eldem, 1974: 371; Eyice, 1994: 457). The kiosk had collapsed at the end of the 1930s because of a fallen tree and its pieces were totally removed during the construction of a military school to this area (Eyice, 1986: 35; Eyice, 1994: 457).

## 2.2. Beylerbeyi Palace sea kiosks

On southern façade of Beylerbeyi Palace, in order to reduce the effect of the massive wall which was built for the purpose of providing privacy and security, sea kiosks were designed by Sarkis Balyan in 1864. One of these kiosks belongs to *Selamlık* and the other belongs to *Harem* (Eldem, 1974: 437). Atasoy mentions that they were constructed for enjoying the view of Bosphorus from the garden (2005: 171).



Figure 2. *Harem* sea kiosk (Sürer, 2011).

The plan scheme of both kiosks consists of a central space under an octagonal dome, additional service spaces and an exterior part with cloister supported by 12 columns (Eldem, 1974: 437; Saner, 1998: 53). Sea kiosks were designed in a new and eclectic style which might be considered as “arabesque”. Nevertheless, they establish an appropriate relation with the palace (Eldem, 1974: 437). Saner considers these kiosks as “orientalist” playing a complementary role with the general design and layout of the palace. The roof reminding the shape of a tent and lasting with pointed arches in the shape of “onion” creates an orientalist impression both on façade and inside. Columns with multiple capitals contain overtones of Moorish Architecture whereas the usage of *muqarnas* points to a reference to Ottoman tradition. Sea kiosks, with all these properties, show similarity with picturesque-exotic kiosks in Europe (1998: 53-55). Inside, adorned with gilded ornaments and various depictions of animals and nature, the strong impact of the dome is realized as well.

## 2.3. Ayazağa Pavilion Çinili Hunting Kiosk

Belonging to the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz (1861-1876), Ayazağa Hunting Kiosk or *Çinili* Hunting Kiosk (Tiled Kiosk) in the garden of Ayazağa Pavilion is known to have been designed by Sarkis Balyan (Eldem, 1976: 187). Atasoy mentions this kiosk as a place where sultan had rested during summer days. In addition, the coffee stove and musicians balcony inside, points to an additional usage as listening to music or having conversations while drinking coffee (2005: 176-177).

In front of the southern façade, there is a pool made of limestone with a length of 100 meters and this layout is an important example among XIX. century garden kiosks (Atasoy, 2005: 176; Koçu, 1960: 1434). Kiosk consists of a central space with dimensions of 16x10 meters, two small rooms and a mezzanine. In the main space, where the coffee stove takes place, there is also a fountain pool in the center. Glazed tiles and hand-drawn ornaments are the main elements of both interior and exterior. Upper windows with colored glasses might be accepted as an innovation

for interior design of this kind of kiosks. Today, this kiosk had been within the borders of a military zone until this area was rented for 49 years to a business firm and their project for a convention center is still being constructed beside the kiosk.



Figure 3. *Çinili* Hunting Kiosk (Archive of Preservation Board of Cultural Resources, directory no. 2).

#### 2.4. Yıldız Palace *Ada* Kiosk

*Ada* Kiosk (Island Kiosk) is located on a small island on Hamid pond in the royal garden of Yıldız Palace to serve as a resting place and a coffee kiosk. Even though, it is said to have been designed by well-known architect D'Aronco, there is no actual source for this information. The exact date of construction is not known either. Nevertheless it is possible to say it was built in the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909).



Figure 4. *Ada* Kiosk (Sürer, 2011).

This wooden kiosk consists of a central space, a small bathroom and an additional small room where a coffee stove takes place. The resting section which is a combination of a rectangular space and half-octagonal niches is located according to the view of the island, pond and the garden. The façade, with vegetative ornaments, reflects the features of Art-Nouveau. Inside, the color white is mainly used in harmony with gilded adornments and wreaths.

#### 2.5. *Selamlık* kiosk in the garden of Theron Damon Kiosk

This garden kiosk, built at the end of XIX<sup>th</sup> century in the eastern side of Theron Damon Kiosk in Caddebostan, has an octagonal plan with two additional rectangles serving as small rooms. As Dr. Müfid Ekdal stated, this small kiosk was built as a *selamlık* without any accommodation purposes like some similar examples in which male visitors were served tea or coffee without being invited into the house (Ekdal, personal interview, March 2, 2012).



The *selamlık* kiosk is remarkable with its carved wooden eaves, curvilinear ornaments and wooden adornment elements. Inside, the main space is densely adorned with vegetative ornaments and other recurrent decorative motives. This garden kiosk has been renovated in 2001 and is still being used as an office by a foundation related with sports (From the archive of *Kültür Varlıklarını Koruma Kurulu*, directory no. 5).



Figure 5. *Selamlık* kiosk (Archive of Preservation Board of Cultural Resources, directory no. 5).

### 3. Conclusion

As a general assessment, when the given examples are observed, it could be said that the tradition of building garden kiosks as enclosed spaces by strengthening the effect of an “indoor” spread especially after XIX<sup>th</sup> century. Various openings on walls which were replaced with former curtains let the kiosks get on with having a strong relation with the surrounding. Interiors with a single room or a single room with additional spaces provided a longer usage of the kiosks during the day resulting with a strong relationship between the users and the garden. On the basis of this approach, the effect of the notion of “a garden to be lived in” must be considered as well. Relying on given examples, it is observed that there is always a main building within the borders of the garden where the garden kiosk is located. Therefore, it is possible to speak of a common form of expression between the main structure and the garden kiosk façades if they are constructed simultaneously. In terms of plan schemes, it can be realized that their plans vary according to topography and the view whereas the interiors mostly reflect the features of Ottoman art combined with new elements from Western art as a result of Westernization Period.

In conclusion, it is seen that, architectural concept of the period has reflected in all details of the buildings of various scales and the effect of this concept has appeared in many garden kiosks. Increasing the number of the examples plays an important role on shedding light on Ottoman garden architecture and history of architecture since this will provide proper protection for existing examples and appropriate renovations in case of necessity.

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